

SUMMER 2009

# PROPANE BUILDER

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**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS**

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# PROPANE

## THE OUTDOOR LIFESTYLE

According to builders and homeowners alike, the key features of a satisfying outdoor lifestyle in Texas include a grill, a pool and spa, and a fireplace or patio heater, all lit with soft gas lighting.

To many discriminating Texans, outdoor living space has become as important as the interior of the house. In a recent survey by Opinion Research Corporation on behalf of the Propane Education & Research Council, 76 percent of homeowners who have finished outdoor rooms report they use them twice a week or more.

Because propane is less expensive than electricity and has a smaller carbon footprint (lower greenhouse gas emissions), more homeowners are also choosing propane to save some green by going green. Homeowners and builders are more “green conscious” than even a few years ago.

**OUTDOOR GRILLS.** In an outdoor kitchen, cooks can fire up the propane grill for everything from burgers to a gourmet meal. Propane eliminates messy ashes and shortens preparation time by providing instant heat. A propane grill can lower cooling costs, too, by keeping the cooking heat outside all summer long.

**POOL AND SPA HEATERS.** Propane heaters quickly warm the water of a luxurious spa or a simple hot tub for fun and relaxation. A propane pool heating system is energy-efficient and a great way to extend the swimming season in Texas.

**OUTDOOR FIREPLACE.** The outdoors can still be appealing during the fall and winter with the warmth and cozy ambience provided by an outdoor fireplace or patio heater.

Unlike a wood-burning fire pit, propane heaters provide reliable, consistent warmth, burn clean, and don't leave a mess behind. With a simple on-off switch, homeowners can use propane heaters to create enough warmth to jump-start spring and extend the enjoyment of their outdoor living spaces through late fall.

Propane table heaters, with their dome-shaped design, allow heat to radiate in all directions, generally warming a space 8 to 10 feet in diameter.

To heat a larger area with maximum flexibility, consider a standing gas patio heater. These heaters are 6 to 7 feet tall and capped with a dome-shaped topper that directs heat downward 20 to 25 feet in all directions. A 20-pound propane tank is tucked into the base of the heater. Patio heaters can be made of stainless steel, painted steel, or cast aluminum.

**DESK AND PATIO LIGHTING.** Propane outdoor lighting fixtures and lamps are available in portable, wall-mounted, and post-mounted styles. Propane outdoor lighting fixtures not only give the light you need, they give your outdoor living area the inviting atmosphere you want.





# THE PROPANE ADVANTAGE

## AN INTERVIEW WITH PAT HEYL



*Photo courtesy of Heyl Homes*

An award-winning and successful builder talks about propane's advantages in the construction of high-end homes and why the future of propane looks bright.

**YOU BUILD LUXURY HOMES. WHAT ATTRACTS THESE BUYERS TO USE PROPANE?**

Two things really. When it's a choice between propane and electric, propane always comes out on top. Economics drives the decision. Lifestyle also drives the decision. These people know what they want their patio, outdoor cooking area and pool area to look like. The look has a European feel; it's the look that a flame gives that no electric bulb can match. Outdoor gas lights give the feel and look a luxury home buyer wants: very upscale.

**WHEN YOU TALK TO NEW CLIENTS ABOUT PROPANE, WHAT QUESTIONS DO THEY ASK MOST OFTEN?**

Again, it goes back to cost and lifestyle. A luxury home demands a pool and Jacuzzi. This would be unreal with electricity. Propane makes it possible.

Pat Heyl is an engineer as well as a builder. He has built more than 200 high-end homes in central Texas for more than two decades. Heyl Homes has won six Texas Association of Builders Star Awards in the past two years.

**WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OTHER INSIGHTS YOU'VE HAD IN BUILDING HIGH-END, LUXURY HOMES THAT USE PROPANE?**

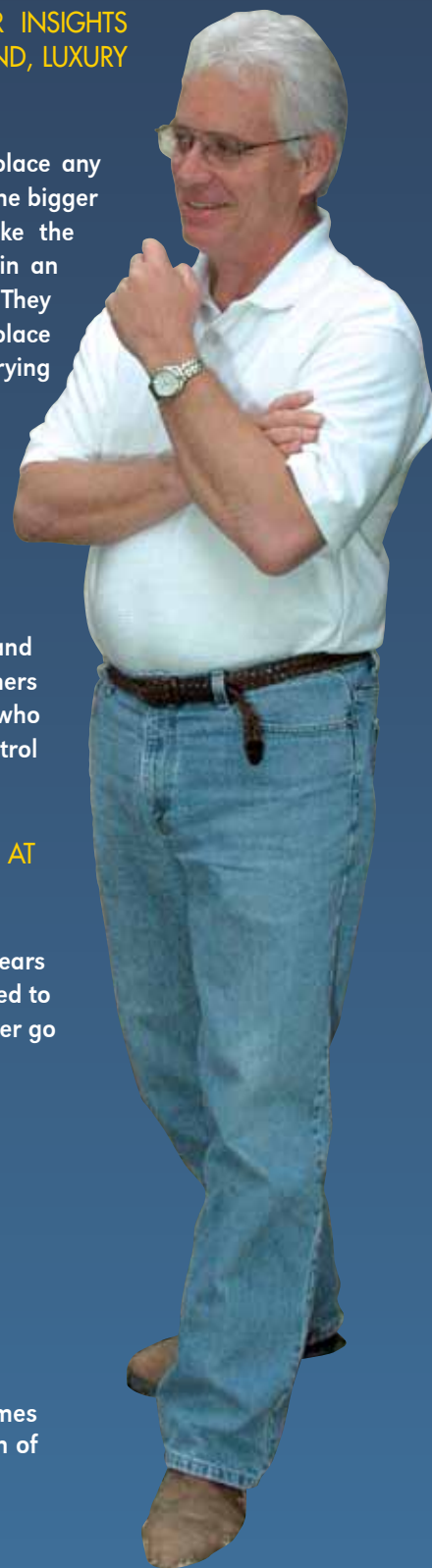
No one wants a wood-burning fireplace any more. They want a propane log kit, the bigger the better. They don't want to take the chance of a spark burning a hole in an expensive European or Asian rug. They don't want to have to clean the fireplace either, or have someone else carrying soot over those same rugs.

**MANY COOKS PREFER PROPANE TO ELECTRICITY; HOW HAS THIS PLAYED OUT WITH YOUR CLIENTS?**

They prefer propane for kitchen and outdoor grills. Some luxury homeowners don't cook very often, but for those who do, quick heat and temperature control are mandatory.

**HAVE YOU ALWAYS USED GAS AT YOUR PERSONAL RESIDENCE?**

No. Our house in Austin for 18 years was all-electric. Now that we've moved to the lake and have propane, we'd never go back. The difference is just dramatic.



## RESIDENTIAL REBATE PROGRAM

### OUTDOOR APPLIANCES

Q. Do outdoor appliances count toward the Propane Star Home Rebate?

A. Yes. The Propane Star and SuperStar Home Rebates are for new construction that includes the following propane appliances:

- Any one of the following new propane appliances:  
gas range, gas cooktop,  
gas oven, gas log set, hard-  
piped gas grill, or hard-wired  
generator, and
- New propane water heater, and
- New propane furnace, and
- New or used propane dryer, or  
additional furnace and piping  
for dryer.



Nick Nelson  
[www.developsenseinc.com](http://www.developsenseinc.com)  
Developsense has received several \$600 Propane Star rebates which included a hard-piped propane grill as one of the eligible appliances.

Builders of spec homes are eligible to claim the rebates.

### CURRENT REBATES

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| \$200 | Installation of propane water heater in a new construction     |
| \$350 | Replacement of electric water heater with propane water heater |
| \$600 | Propane Star Home  |
| \$800 | Propane SuperStar Home   |

NOTE: Builders may apply for one or more individual propane water heater rebates for a single property, but may not combine a water heater rebate with a Star Home or SuperStar Home rebate on the same property.

For more information about rebates visit [www.propane.tx.gov](http://www.propane.tx.gov) or contact Eileen Latham at (512) 475-2911 or [eileen.latham@rrc.state.tx.us](mailto:eileen.latham@rrc.state.tx.us).